

## Star Wars

### Wizard's RPG Stories

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#### A Mother's Memoirs, Continued

By Morrie Mullins

Mother Dariana of the Hiironi imparts more of her accumulated wisdom and discusses the Tarasin perspective on recent events in Cularin. She also addresses the arguments brewing over the recently recovered writings of Reidi Artom. It's all in our latest supplement to the Living Force campaign!

Some time ago, Mother Dariana of the Hiironi released a portion of her memoirs. She spoke about life and the Force, and she revealed that even one so revered as she had come close to walking the path to darkness. Not, of course, that Mother Dariana seemed to think of herself as revered. If anything, her creaking voice made her sound tired, weary from the burdens she's chosen (or been chosen) to carry throughout her life. For a time, her health faded far enough that many thought she might be preparing to become one with the Force. That time, however, has not yet come. In this recording, Mother Dariana again speaks about her life, offering lessons she has attempted to learn and speculating on how they might relate to recent goings-on in her home system.

Tell me when I should begin. The box you bring here has so many lights that my old eyes are near blinded, and all of them flash at once, and if I had grown up with such things they might not befuddle me quite so much. But I did not, and so I can sit and stare at them, marveling that the Force is in these things, as it is in all things, and yet I cannot see how they work. There are threads of light, connections between your machines and your body, between your machines and my body, but for all that, they do not speak to me.

It is on, then? I suppose I shall begin.

In preparing for these sessions, I always think to myself, "Imagine that you will be speaking to your children." I've spoken to my children for years uncounted, and there is no better feeling for me than to sit atop a cushion, look out at the faces surrounding me, waiting for me to speak, waiting for the conversation to be renewed. There is a moment of expectation, a tension that twists the air -- a pleasant twisting, mind you, as one might get at the anticipation of meeting a lover after long months apart -- and it is in that moment that the ties that bind us all, one to another, are strongest. The truth of communication is found not in the words we speak, but in the silence that precedes and follows our words.

That would be my theme, I suppose. We must listen to the silence. Listen.

If I pause, then -- if I seem to be waiting for someone else to speak --

- it is not simply because of my years. The pauses in the great conversation of the sentients, the spaces that exist when words are left unsaid, tell us as much about the speaker and the listener as do the words themselves. Often more.

She takes a deep breath, and exhales slowly with a wheezing chuckle. For several seconds, she doesn't speak, merely breathes.

What occupies the silence? The vastness of untapped potential, the empty space between worlds in which we live when we speak to one another? Think, during the pauses. Ponder what you are imagining, and why. Let your mind be free, and discover what it is that we are not saying, what it is that we are not considering. Consider the emptiness.

This is a lesson it seems we all need to be reminded of. Even I, for all the words I use to say that we must be vigilant, for all the warnings I might have offered about threats and darkness and the evil that must exist within each of us, in order to give the goodness of our actions meaning. I must be reminded that it is what I have not said that reveals the most about me. It is what you hear in the words I do not say that reveals the most about you.

Before you mistake me for a rambling old crone, allow me to share a story. In the spring of my nineteenth summer, I met a Human female wandering my jungles.

I thought of them as "my" jungles, you see, because I could not imagine anyone other than a Tarasin laying claim to them. Perhaps the kilassin or the mulissiki might have a legitimate claim, if only the creatures chose to exercise it, if only they had the force of mind to realize their potential. Each of us possesses the potential for greatness, after all. It is what comes of being alive.

I met this Human in the jungle, and she met me, and our eyes communicated lifetimes of information before either of us opened our mouths. I looked at her and saw someone older than myself, but by how much I could not say. She had long hair the color of Morasil at dusk, which she wore pulled back in a braid that flicked back and forth over her sweat-streaked neck. Her eyes were the color of horonna leaves - - calm, pale green, and very soothing. I found her clothing strange - - my kind do not, after all, generally wear long breeches or shirts with sleeves that reach to our wrists during the hottest part of the day - - and I found the blasters she wore on each hip more than a little discomfiting.

I can only imagine what I must have looked like to her. A primitive, wrapped in a shawl, carrying a short spear, wandering the jungle. A threat? I had a spear. She, two blasters. But life had shown me already that those who do not know your ways may take any action for hostility, and those who respond most quickly to perceived threats of violence are those who carry the most violence in their own hearts. Which made things more than a little awkward for me, as I struggled to initiate communication with her while not frightening her so much that she might attack.

At the same time, though, I did not want to let the silence end. Because every moment we did not speak, I learned more about her. The way she shifted her weight from right foot to left, the way her too-rapid blinking betrayed

her fear of me, the way her eyes flashed to the trees above my head, as though a great flying kilassin might swoop down on my command, snatch her up, and make a meal of her.

Through this, there was also calm. She was wary, but something in her kept the wariness from bearing her down with its weight. She smelled of confidence, but not arrogance. She felt fear - - and perhaps I flatter myself that it might have been due to my presence, when she might have been nervous about the jungle itself, which was clearly not her native environment - - and yet, she didn't allow herself to be controlled by it. She recognized the fear and moved past it, keeping pace with the moment. Fearing me or the jungle wouldn't help her if the fear blinded her to a real danger. So she continued to search. After a time, I spoke.

"I am Dariana, of the Hiironi."

She made a small bow, a gesture I find even more amusing now, looking back on it, than I did at the time. And at the time, I almost laughed out loud. Bowing? To me? Clearly, this must be an off-worlder. No one from Cularin would bother bowing to a young Tarasin woman of no means and barely any name of her own.

"I am a Traveler."

I waited. There had to be more. But there wasn't. And when she spoke the word, I heard it capitalized. Not just a traveler. A Traveler. As though there were nothing else she could be, nothing else that made sense for her. A word that defined her. So much, in a single word. It told me everything about her, but also told me nothing at all. What I learned of her came more from what she did not say than from what she did.

Then she turned and walked back into the trees, and I continued on my way, and Cularin continued to spin through the galaxy.

I had considered telling this story without returning to a "lesson." It always seems trite, to me, to come back to the beginning of a story in order to tell the listener what it is she should have learned, because doing so limits the listener. If I tell you what you need to know, then you will not choose your own lesson, you will not follow your own path. You will instead find yourself tied to the path I have chosen for you, and this may not be the best path, or even a good path, but it is certainly not your path. It is mine.

So saying this, I will tell you my path, my lesson, what I take away from this story.

In the galaxy, there is much more apparent emptiness than wholeness. There is the vastness of space, dotted with rocks and gravity-bound spheres of liquid flame. But the emptiness is not empty. It never has been. And when we begin to assume its emptiness is also its truth, when we assume that the pauses in the conversation bear no meaning, that is when the things that live in the dark begin to hold sway over us. They stand in the dark, and we do not see them, and then they are among us. Because we have assumed that those we did not hear never spoke. Because we have assumed that those we did not see were never present.

There is more to this galaxy than what we see and what we hear. There is more to an individual than the words she speaks. The lessons of history that we must be most careful to heed are the lessons that were not written down, were not recorded. The voices we cannot hear are the ones whose warnings are shouted the loudest of all.

Listen. They are calling to Cularin.